

Forkner Floor Covering

2490

RECEIVED
OREGON OPERATIONS OFFICE

U.S EPA
ATTN: Harbor Comments
805 SW Broadway, Suite 500
Portland, OR 97205

AUG 19 2016

EPA-REGION 10

My business, Forkner Floor Covering, has been in operation in Portland since 2008. While I do not rely on the Willamette River, I drive over it every day, and my proximity to this Portland landmark has helped me understand the concerns that other local businesses have regarding the EPA's Superfund plan. This plan to dredge the riverbed would cost local residents and businesses millions and potentially billions of dollars, and might not even effectively address the serious issue of contamination that the river faces.

Taxpayers must help fund this Superfund plan to dredge contaminated sediment from the riverbed. The EPA's current estimate for this project doesn't seem realistic. If they say that it could take one billion dollars, it could easily take two billion dollars or even more to fund the plan. This enormous cost would cause taxes to increase, something that many Oregon and Portland residents and business owners simply can't afford. I certainly cannot afford another tax increase. If the tax increase was too great, it would probably close my business. That sort of money would better serve the community by repairing roads, not dredging the riverbed. This is an overly ambitious plan that was created by government bureaucrats, and I do not believe that they have the severe impact on residents and business owners like me in mind. I am a firm believer that locals should have input into plans like this: our tax dollars fund it, and we are the ones who will have to live with the consequences.

Not only would it be wildly expensive, I do not believe that this plan is the most effective solution for the problem. The extensive dredging could not only take decades, it could actually disturb the contaminants that have been sealed off on the river bottom and pollute the environment again. If there are other, better cleanup options, I would certainly want to explore them first.

It's also important that any plan we consider is made with the most up-to-date data in mind. The EPA's plan draws primarily from data taken more than a decade ago. The river of today just isn't the river it was twelve years ago. We've come a long way in managing the pollution of the river, for example controlling the sewage that goes into the water. More recent data from 2014 shows that the river's natural processes have actually helped remove at least forty percent of the river's contamination. The EPA has ignored this data, instead advocating for a plan that could actually reverse all of the progress that has already been made. Where appropriate, we should let the river heal itself naturally instead of interfering with invasive dredging. The EPA's current Superfund plan is not a plan that Portland residents had a hand in creating. Because of its cost and its risks, I simply cannot support it.

(b) (6)

Sincer

(b) (6)

(b) (6)

Owner